

Humble Beginnings

Betsy King had dreamed of being a teacher since she was a child. Betsy recalls visiting her mom in her high school classroom and how these experiences influenced her to be a teacher. Later in her teen years, Betsy said that her experience at Avon Lake High School was wonderful. “The teachers and students were wonderful. My special ed teacher was the best,” Betsy shared. Because of her success in high school and her dream to work with children, Betsy knew that college was the next step. Understanding that some of her challenges included reading and completing tasks and assignments on time, Betsy was seeking a program that would provide support to be successful academically, but also support her career goals. Betsy and her family



Betsy on graduation day!

found the perfect fit at the University of Cincinnati (UC) with the Transition & Access Program (TAP). TAP is a four-year residential college education for young adults with mild to moderate disabilities.

Honing Her Skills

TAP provided Betsy with the chance to go to college and to pursue her career working with children. TAP gave Betsy the chance to maximize her strengths, especially working well with kids. Betsy took advantage of all that TAP has to offer. She took courses like Personal Finance, English, and Psychology. Betsy shared that Personal Finance

was a major help in living independently. “It helped me pay bills on my own,” said Betsy. While at UC, Betsy also took three early childhood classes to help her achieve her career goals. TAP’s specialized curriculum was also a great support to Betsy which provides classes to develop skills for employment and social communication. “It [TAP] gave me support by explaining projects and assignments in a way I could understand,” Betsy said. In terms of independent living, Betsy shared how there is a difference between living in a college dorm and your own residence. “It’s much different from living in the dorm. You have to make your own food, buy groceries and wake up on time. I got used to waking up on time. I like it.” TAP helped Betsy transition to living independently, which Betsy capitalized, gaining the skills she needed to live on her own.



Betsy on campus at the University of Cincinnati

Internship & Support

Another aspect of the TAP curriculum that supported Betsy’s career goals is providing meaningful internship experiences. Betsy had an internship at the UC Early Learning Center, where she was a teacher’s assistant. While at her internship, Betsy would grade papers, make copies and watch children ages 3-5 years old. TAP provides support

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in several ways so that students will increase independence and success in their internships. Betsy had a TAP job coach and also took a class, Vocational Support, to help her develop the necessary skills to be successful. She also created a very useful digital portfolio that Betsy uses when applying and interviewing for jobs. Betsy explained that she created “[a] digital portfolio on Wix, and when we apply for jobs it looks good.” Betsy made the career path for herself; she was glad to have had help on her way. “[TAP] made sure I was in the path I wanted,” Betsy explained.

Successful Outcomes

Looking back, Betsy remembers the overwhelming emotion when graduating. “It felt awesome [graduating from TAP] because I achieved my goal and I was going to advance to the next step of my life.” After graduating from TAP in 2018, Betsy’s dream came true. She was hired by the UC Early Learning Center to work with children and support the teachers and staff. “It feels really great because I get to work with children and it’s my passion,” Betsy said. Betsy King is a true success story. Betsy was able to overcome challenges and succeed. “I felt great because I knew what I wanted to do after school.” Her dreams of becoming an independent educator have been realized and there’s no doubt her successes will continue.

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The University of Cincinnati Transition and Access Program (TAP) is a four-year residential college education for young adults with disabilities. TAP students earn a university recognized certificate upon completion of the program. TAP is emerging as a leader in creating an authentic inclusive living-learning opportunity that builds career skills, academic achievement, personal responsibility, social networks, and a promising future. To learn more about TAP please visit: <https://cech.uc.edu/tap>



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

SAMUEL SCHELL-OLSEN is a currently a 4th year at the University of Cincinnati. Like Betsy, Sam is also is a TAP student and was enrolled in the 2016 Fall Semester. Sam is expected to graduate in Spring 2020 at UC with a bachelor’s degree in Journalism. Sam received his associate’s degree in Liberal Arts at UC Blue Ash in the Summer 2018. Sam is currently the Opinion Editor at UC’s student newspaper, The News Record. Sam is the first openly autistic college editor in Ohio’s history.



Sam in Washington, D.C for the 2019 Conservative Political Action Conference.